

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

VOL. XXI. No. 22.]

LONDON, SATURDAY, MAY 30, 1812.

[Price 1s.]

"It was my own sufferings that caused the melancholy event; and I hope it will be a warning to future ministers, to attend to the applications and prayers of those who suffer by oppression."  
—BELLINGHAM'S dying words.

673]

[674

## TO THE PRINCE REGENT,

ON THE CASE OF MR. BELLINGHAM,

*And on certain circumstances connected with, and growing out of, the act for which he has recently suffered death.*

### LETTER I.

Sir,

The letters, which I, some time ago addressed to your Royal Highness, have, I am inclined to believe, produced a due share of effect, and this belief encourages me to address you again. The subject upon which I then wrote was of great importance; but, that, upon which I now propose to write, is of far greater importance.

Your Royal Highness has, I perceive, been advised to cause to be published certain anonymous Letters, threatening you with death, which measure of publication shews that those letters are looked upon in a very serious light; that they contain menaces not to be despised; that, in short, your advisers look upon your person as in some danger from the persons sending the said threats. At such a time, Sir, it will not be thought impertinent, I hope, if I presume to offer your Royal Highness such advice as appears to me likely to be useful to you. If my advice had been taken, on the *former* subject, we should not now be menaced with an American war; and, if it be taken on *this* subject, we may, perhaps, avoid some, at least, of the many and awful calamities which now appear to be almost inevitable. With this persuasion in my mind, I shall proceed respectfully to submit to you my observations; I. On the Case of Mr. Bellingham, that is to say, on the nature and grounds of his complaint; II. On the Liberty of the Press, as applicable to this case; III. On the conduct of the People upon the Occasion; and IV. On the grants to the family of Mr. Perceval.

I. On the Case of Mr. Bellingham, as described by himself, the observation of the whole nation has been, that it was a

very cruel case. That he was an Englishman nobody can deny; nor will it, I think, be denied, that he was entitled, in Russia, to the protection of his country. Whether he received all the protection that was due to him, is another question, and it is a question which I shall not decide upon. The allegations, however, on his part, were, that he was unjustly imprisoned and detained in prison, in Russia, for several years; he states that he was, in one case, imprisoned because he refused to pay two thousand rubles, and, that it was afterwards acknowledged that he did not owe them. If this were so, the imprisonment was false and the act tyrannical, and he was entitled to protection. Lord G. L. Gower (*since the death* of Mr. Bellingham) has written and caused to be published a letter in vindication of his own conduct and that of the Consul; but, to say nothing of the circumstance of the other party not being alive to answer them, Lord Gower, in stating that Mr. Bellingham was imprisoned for the debt of 2,000 rubles, does not say a word about the charge ever having been acknowledged to be a *false* one; and, yet, it is next to impossible not to believe that this was the case. Indeed, this letter of Lord Gower does nothing, in my opinion, either in the way of self-exculpation, or in that of inculpation against Mr. Bellingham. The declarations of the two parties are opposed to each other. Mr. Bellingham says he was neglected, and abandoned to the scourge of tyranny; Lord Gower says he was not; and, it must be left to the world to judge between them.

But, Sir, there appears to be certain notions prevalent, as relating to Mr. Bellingham's claim to protection in Russia, which notions appear to me to call loudly for censure. It has been said (by those who are seldom too wise) that he was *troublesome* to Lord G. L. Gower; that his *private affair* was nothing to our Ambassador; that he chose to go to Russia, and to put himself under the Russian government, and that he must *take the consequences*. This

Z

notion, Sir, is not easily reconcileable with the practice of sending Embassadors and Consuls into foreign countries, especially when it is done at an immense expense. Mr. Bellingham, by entering the territory of Russia, did not get rid of his obligations of *allegiance* to the King, and, of course, he did not thereby forfeit his right to all the protection which the treaties between England and Russia warranted our government in giving him. It is an old and an incontrovertible maxim, that protection and allegiance go hand in hand; that one cannot be without the other; and, as no one will pretend, that it would not have been *treason* for Mr. Bellingham, while in Russia, to have plotted the death of the King; so, no one can pretend to deny, that he was entitled to the protection of the representative of that King. He did not put himself under the Russian government. He was still under his own government. He had only to conform to the *laws* of Russia; but, if he did not violate those, he ought not to have been suffered to remain a moment at the mercy of any governor in Russia, or even at that of the Emperor. Merchants and Mariners are, by our laws, encouraged to trade abroad; and, this is, surely, for the supposed benefit of the nation; but, then, protection is due to them while in pursuit of that trade, else who would engage in it? Why else have we *commercial treaties*; why resident Embassadors and Consuls? The sums which these cost the nation do not amount to a trifle. In the year 1808, the year in which the alleged grievances of Mr. Bellingham appear to have reached their utmost point; in that year there were paid out of the taxes raised upon the people of this country,

To Embassadors . . .	£ 21,031	15	2
To Envoys Extraordinary and Ministers Plenipo- tentiary . . . . .	27,988	0	0
To Envoys Extraordinary . . . . .	1,628	0	0
To Ministers Plenipotentiary . . . . .	2,016	0	0
To a Resident . . . . .	1,334	0	0
To Secretaries of Legation . . . . .	4,560	7	0
To Consuls . . . . .	15,152	0	0

---

73,710 2 2

Besides which there was paid, in the same year, in pensions to <i>late fo-</i> <i>reign ministers</i> , the sum of . . . . .	57,589	0	0
--	--------	---	---

---

£ 131,299 2 2

This, Sir, is the sum which this nation had to pay out of the taxes, to foreign Ministers and Consuls, in the year 1808. This was the sum then *annually* paid for this purpose. It may have *decreased* since 1808, though that is not very probable; but, at any rate, it is a monstrous sum. It is a sum about sufficient to afford 40 shillings to each family of manufacturers in the kingdom. It is, surely, Sir, a sum for which the nation, who pays it, have a good right to expect some services in return. If any one had, in the year 1808, or at any other time, complained of the immense expense of this diplomatic body, the answer would have been, that it was necessary, amongst other things, for the protection of the interests of English merchants trading to foreign countries. This is certainly one of the grounds that would have been stated for so heavy an expenditure. And, this being the case, I am sure that your Royal Highness will perceive, that every complaint on the part of an Englishman, made to our Embassadors (or other Ministers) or Consuls, in foreign countries, ought to be diligently attended to, and, if possible, immediately redressed; that this is amongst the most important duties of such public ministers; and that, a neglect of such duties is a crime equal to that of any magistrate who neglects to render justice to complainants at home. As to the expense of our foreign ministers in this particular case, Lord G. L. Gower, who was an Embassador, was paid, while in Russia, at the rate of upwards of £12,000 a year; his secretary, Mr. Charles Stuart, at the rate of about £1,300 a year; and Mr. Shairp, the Consul, at the rate of £1,000. This was a large sum of money for the nation to pay for foreign agents in only one country; and, for this sum of money it had a right, and every individual of it had a right, to expect some services. But, the expense is, in all probability, very far from stopping here; for, it is a general rule to give to all these foreign Ministers, Secretaries, and Consuls, *pensions for life*; and to such as have been Embassadors very large pensions. I have not, at hand, the means of knowing whether Lord G. L. Gower and Mr. Shairp have been pensioned in the usual way; but, if they have, the cost of their services for the year 1808 may, in the end, be ten times the amount of their salaries. Again, therefore, I beg leave to observe, that the nation, and every individual of the nation, had a full right to expect great services at their hands, and that it is a gross insult to

the pu  
Mr. B  
to say  
vate in  
not to  
latter

Th  
pears  
person  
case,  
It has  
" here  
" trea  
observ  
" to a  
" cho  
" eno  
servat  
the du  
disgui  
tion,  
" hav  
" mer  
observ  
lishma  
but, i  
many  
by a  
not on  
ments  
Spanis  
tion o  
ill-tre  
and, i  
to the  
is not  
credit  
were  
of the  
claims  
gocia  
of lea  
missio  
vestig  
of the  
the ca  
to wa  
gover  
the a  
And,  
gover  
tend  
no me  
end o  
who  
is th  
mean  
It  
in fa  
quest

the public to talk of the *troublesomeness* of Mr. Bellingham to Lord G. L. Gower, and to say, as some persons have, that the private interests and safety of the former ought not to be considered as any concern of the latter.

The same sort of notion, however, appears to have been entertained by some persons with regard to the duty, in this case, of the *Executive Government at home*. It has been asked, "what the government *here* could have to do with this man's "treatment in *Russia*;" and it has been observed, "that, if the government were "to attend to the complaints that every one "chooses to make to it, it would have "enough to do." Such questions and observations argue a profound ignorance of the duties of a government, or a desire to disguise the truth. In answer to the question, "what the government *here* could "have to do with Mr. Bellingham's treatment in *Russia*," it is only necessary to observe, that Mr. Bellingham was an Englishman, owing allegiance to the King; but, it may further be observed, that, in many cases, the treatment of individuals by a foreign state has been the cause, not only of the interference of their governments, but of long and bloody wars. The Spanish war at the close of the administration of Sir Robert Walpole arose out of the ill-treatment of individual Englishmen; and, in the case of the merchants trading to the American colonies (now States), it is notorious that their claims on American creditors, in the recovery of which they were obstructed by laws passed in several of the States; it is notorious that these claims have been the subject of several negotiations; that they have been the cause of leading articles in treaties; that Commissioners have been appointed for the investigation of them; and, that the assertion of these claims have, more than once, been the cause of what was nearly approaching to war. It appears, therefore, that the government *here* had something to do with the alleged wrongs of Mr. Bellingham. And, indeed, what is the business of a government, if it be not its business to attend to the complaints of those, who have no means of redress in courts of law? The end of all government, is, the *good* of those who agree to live under it; and, what *good* is there without *protection*; without the means of obtaining a redress of wrongs?

It may be said, that Mr. Bellingham had, in fact, experienced *no wrong*. That is a question which we are not in a state to de-

cide, as we might have been if his case had been investigated. And, here, I beseech your Royal Highness to observe, that the complaint of Mr. Bellingham against the government, was, not *that they refused him money*, as a reported speech of your minister, Lord Castlereagh, represented it. This was not his complaint; but, his complaint was, that he could obtain *no hearing*; *no investigation*; *no trial* of his claim. He complained, that he was bandied about from office to office, from Secretary to Secretary; and, that he could obtain nothing like investigation any where. He asserted this over and over again as being the cause, and the sole cause, of the act for which he has suffered death. He said, that he had taken *the only way that was left him of making his case known to the world*. He said, that he had petitioned your Royal Highness; that he had been referred to the privy-council; that he had applied to the Secretary of State; that he had laid a petition before members of parliament, in order to get it presented; that they had told him that he must obtain the consent of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to have it presented; that he thus went with a petition to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to be permitted to petition a member of parliament to present his petition to the House of Commons! He seems to have explored "the *Right of Petition*" to its utmost bounds! He, however, failed at last; he could not obtain Mr. Perceval's permission to get a member to present his petition; and, not ten minutes before he expired, he declared, that, "had my petition been "brought into parliament, this catastrophe "would not have happened."

II. But, Sir, there is another consideration of great moment connected with this transaction; and that is, the *state of the press*. It is notorious, that, since Mr. Perceval became minister, state prosecutions for what is called *Libel* have increased far beyond all former example. The discussions in parliament, in the winter of 1811, placed this fact out of dispute. The fears that have prevailed amongst all those who have wished to speak the truth of the public conduct of public men are hardly to be described. As to the Press, it has been "*the reign of terror*." Mr. Bellingham, I doubt not, endeavoured to make his case known through the press; but I am sure he would find no man in all England stout enough to publish it, though the truth of every word were sworn to; for, Sir, according to the present maxim of law, the

*truth* of a publication is no justification, and, indeed, such a justification will not be listened to. If Mr. Bellingham had published his case agreeably to his defence, it would have accused Lord G. L. Gower and Mr. Shairp of *neglect of duty*, and (as determined in the case of Lord St. Vincent against Mr. Heriot) to accuse a public functionary in our country of neglect of duty is to accuse him of a crime, and is, therefore, a libel. Upon this very ground Mr. Heriot, late proprietor of the *Sun and True Briton*, was imprisoned for six months for publishing a paragraph accusing Lord St. Vincent and the Admiralty of negligence in not sending out convoys or cruizers, in proper time, to the Eastern seas. After this, there was no publisher who would venture to put forth a case like that of Mr. Bellingham, or, at least, such a case as he alleged his to be.

I beseech you, then, Sir, to pause here for a moment, and to consider in what degree the death of Mr. Perceval may be reasonably ascribed to this state of the press. Mr. Bellingham's great desire was to obtain *publicity* of his wrongs. He said most distinctly, several times over, that he committed the act, because he found that that was *the only way he had left of obtaining a public discussion of his case*. Now, Sir, if he had had a free press open to him; if he had found the press ready to receive and promulgate his complaint; if he had had this method open to him of making his wrongs known to the world, it is likely that he would thereby have been satisfied, or, at least, appeased so far as to have prevented him from doing what he did. If he had found an opening through the press, he would have seen his affair discussed. That discussion might have produced him the redress he demanded; or, it might have produced in his mind a conviction that his claim upon government was not well founded; or, failing in both these, it would, at any rate, have afforded him the satisfaction of knowing, that the world was made acquainted with his sufferings, and with what he deemed the wrongs done him by government; and he would have had the consolation to believe, that the public commiserated his case. Either of these effects of publication might, and, in all human probability, would, have prevented that which he himself called, the fatal catastrophe. But, unfortunately, he had no channel through which to make known his case to the country. There was no press open to him; or, if he found some incautious printer

and bookseller to send forth his complaint in a pamphlet, he saw himself liable to heavy fine, long sureties, pillory, and long imprisonment, and, perhaps, in a distant jail and a solitary cell, without any justification being permitted to be grounded upon the *truth* of what he might publish. He had tasted too much of prisons not to prefer certain death to such an experiment.

If you see this in the light that I do, Sir, you will not fail to be upon your guard against any one who would persuade you, that to stifle the press is the way to secure the peace and happiness of the country. An Essay, published by me at the outset of the Inquiry into the conduct of the Duke of York, in the year 1809, when numerous Ex-Officio Informations had been filed against the press, contained a passage, which I hope I shall be excused for now repeating, in the hope that your Royal Highness will deem it worthy of attention: "It is an observation that can have escaped no man, that despotic governments have never tolerated free discussion on political matters. The reason is plain: their deeds will not bear the display of reason and the light of truth. But, what has been the invariable consequence? The sudden final destruction of those governments. The flame of discontent is smothered, not extinguished; the embers are still alive, the materials drying, the combustibles engendering; some single accidental spark, from within or without, at last communicates the destructive principle, and down comes the pile, crumbling upon the heads of its possessors. Let free discussion take its course, and, as you proceed, abuses and corruptions are done away, redress, from time to time, is obtained; or, at the very least, *the breast of the injured and indignant is unloaded*. But, punish men for writing plainly, and they will resort to metaphor or fable; punish them for that, and they will talk; punish them for that, and they will whisper; and, at every stage of restriction, they will, by their additional bitterness, shew, that, to the feeling of public, is added the feeling of personal injury, and also of *personal resentment*." I expressed a hope, that arguments like these would have weight with Mr. Perceval and his colleagues. They had no weight. The press has been dealt with in a manner that I need not describe; but, Sir, have harmony, peace, and safety been the consequence? Has the nation derived any very striking

benefit of a man has been again Th more to sp matte rest. "eve pain resen may, when more long lips time, fails Roya that vince spea to do gard to p are my in f in t may wei hav sent com Roy serv pre the oco you fir be pr ne Be ut a it hi tr ne sa on sa " " "

benefit from seeing its affairs in the hands of a late Attorney General? And can any man point us out the salutary effects of what has been going on, for the last five years, against the press?

There are few things that fill men with more resentment than the being forbidden to speak or write the truth as to public matters, in which every man has an interest. St. PAUL says: "I kept silence even from good words, though it was *pain and grief to me.*" Every man feels resentment against those, be they who they may, that compel him to hold his tongue, when he neither utters, nor wishes to utter, more than the truth. Every such man longs for the time when he may unlock his lips with safety; and, if he ever see that time, is it at all wonderful that he seldom fails to remember the past? I think your Royal Highness will say that it is not; and that you will be of opinion, that, to convince a man, that he is never to dare to speak the truth under any given system, is to do all that can be done to make him regardless of consequences in his endeavours to procure a change of that system. These are reasons which ought to weigh, and, in my opinion, ought to be, at once, decisive in favour of a free press, in every country in the world; but, at any rate, I hope I may rely upon their having their due weight with your Royal Highness. We have just witnessed the fatal effects of *resentment pent up in the breast of a single complainant.* I hope and trust, that your Royal Highness, in your selection of future servants, will have it especially in view to prevent the existence of similar feelings in the breast of the mass of the people.

III. *The conduct of the people* upon this occasion is well worthy of the attention of your Royal Highness; I shall, therefore, first, shortly describe what that conduct has been. It has been stated in the public prints, that the people, when assembled near the Houses of Parliament, just as Mr. Bellingham was about to be taken to prison, uttered shouts of applause, and shewed such a strong disposition in favour of him, that it was not thought safe to attempt to take him to prison without the assistance of a troop of horse soldiers, and even with them not till midnight; that they expressed their satisfaction at what he had done, and that one in particular was taken into custody for saying, "I'll fire off my gun to-morrow. I did not think there had been an Englishman left with such a heart. He could not have killed a greater rascal." It has

been stated, and, indeed, it is very notorious, that the news of the death of Mr. Perceval excited demonstrations of joy, the most unequivocal, amongst the people in several of the most populous parts of England; that at Nottingham the church bells were rung, at Leicester there was a supper and songs, at Sheffield there were sheep roasted whole; that, in short, the shouts in Palace-Yard were but a signal for popular rejoicing through the country. It is equally notorious, that, while the trial of Mr. Bellingham was going on, *troops* were in readiness at no great distance; and that similar precautions were taken at the time of his execution. Lastly, it is notorious, that he died amidst the blessings of the great mass of the spectators, and that his garments have been eagerly bought up as *precious relics*.\*

It is true, that a hired press has asserted, that the persons who thus rejoiced, who thus bestowed upon Bellingham such unequivocal marks of applause and admiration; it is true, that the hired press (that greater deceiver of princes) has asserted, that these persons are *monsters*; that they are *mob*; that they are *despicable rabble*. Sir, I wish *you* could have seen the men, whose blessings met the ear of Bellingham as he drew his last breath. I wish you could have seen their looks, which were such as one may suppose to be those of a family of brothers round the bed of a dying brother. I wish you could have seen them, Sir. You would not have thought them monsters or mob; and, least of all would you have thought them objects of *contempt*. Indeed, it is a fact not to be denied, that, amongst the mass of the people, the event has been a subject of great joy; and, therefore, the true friends of your Royal Highness will call your attention to the real *cause* of this joy, instead of endeavouring to excite in your mind hatred or contempt of the people.

The hired press may say what it pleases; it may call the people, who were met in Palace-Yard and in the Old Bailey, *monsters* as long as it pleases; it may extend the appellation of *monster* to the people of Nottingham and elsewhere; but, after all, these are *Englishmen*, and, if they be monsters, *what has made them so?* These

---

\* It was before stated, that his loose brown coat, in which he was executed, was sold for *ten pounds*, and the rest of his garments in proportion. It has been since stated, that the *buttons* of his clothes have been sold for *a dollar each*.

hirelings should recollect under whose sway the people have become monsters, unless, indeed, they mean to contend, that their forefathers were monsters also, and that we are a nation of monsters, with the exception of those only who approve of the present system of political measures. The hired press may say what it pleases; but, when it has done its utmost, the world will believe, that those promiscuous thousands who *cheered* Bellingham in Palace-Yard, and who *blessed* him in the Old Bailey, expressed the genuine feelings of the great mass of the people of England. The hired press may say what it pleases; but this will be the belief of the world. The addresses of condolence, carried to your Royal Highness by the *Middlesex Magistrates*, by the *Houses of Parliament*, by the *Vestry of Mary-le bone parish*, and by an endless number of Mayors and Aldermen, and Borough Reeves and Recorders; the expressions of sorrow and of horror tendered to you by these bodies are all, doubtless, very proper; but, Sir, I am sure that you are too wise not to distinguish between these addresses and the spontaneous demonstrations and expressions of the people; and, I am sure, that you must have seen with regret, that, in no instance, has there been a *popular* feeling discovered favourable to these addresses; but that, on the contrary, they have been a subject of popular dissent.

What, then, is the *cause* of this? Are the people of England become bloody-minded? Are they so changed under the sway of your Royal Highness's family as to be assassins in heart? Oh! no, Sir. The people of England are what they always were. They shudder at the thoughts of shedding human blood; and they abhor every thing foul in the way of attack. It was not at the *shedding of Mr. Perceval's blood* that they rejoiced; it was not that, but it was at the death of a man whom they regarded as being, in part at least, the cause of what, in various ways, the country has so long been suffering. They did not, in their view of the matter, bestow their blessings on a *murderer*, but, on an Englishman, whom they regarded (perhaps erroneously) as having been grievously ill used by the government, and who had taken vengeance into his own hands. It is quite useless to inquire how far these popular feelings square with the rules laid down by moralists. Such have been, and such are, the feelings, and a wise politician will clearly perceive, that they are merely indications of what the people

feel towards the ministers and their system generally; he will perceive, that they are clear indications of a spirit of hostility to the public measures, which, for a long time past, have been adopted.

Where, then, shall I presume to advise your Royal Highness to look for a *remedy*? Not in measures of coercion; not in acts of severity; not in a sharpening of the penal code; but in measures of conciliation; in measures of gentleness; in measures calculated to convince the people, that your Royal Highness feels for their distresses, and, that if you fail in relieving them, it is only because immediate relief is beyond the reach of human power. Above all things would I advise your Royal Highness to shun, as you would shun the bite of a mad dog, the advice and even the society of any one who would recommend to you to place your reliance upon a *military force*, a species of reliance which has, in the end, invariably been the ruin, and, in England, the destruction, of every prince who has ever had the folly to resort to it. To offer this advice, to seem to presume that it may be necessary, I should regard as very improper, had I not seen a work, written by a *member of parliament*, and "dedicated *by permission*" to your Royal Highness, in which work the necessity of erecting *inland fortresses* in one part of the kingdom, and of establishing *camps of exercise* in the other, *after the Prussian manner*, and with a view of keeping the people in order, is openly and unequivocally recommended. Your Royal Highness does not hear the sentiments of the people. The hired press, like the lying prophets of old, utters nothing but smooth things. That part of the press which is not hired is too much under the impression of fear to convey to you a hundredth part of the truth. But, I will venture to tell your Royal Highness, that, amongst all the subjects of public discontent, none has been more general than the *proposed erection of Barracks at Mary-le-bone*; and that, amongst all the acts of Mr. Perceval, there was none that excited more ill-will against him than the manner in which he spoke of this project; the hardy manner in which he talked of a depot, in twenty-seven acres of ground, to hold troops and cannon; the cutting way in which he observed upon the necessity of lodging the horses and men in the same place, lest the latter should be intercepted in their way to the former by the people. This language gave deep and general offence. It was, in fact, braving the peo-

ple; it and tha neither metrop necessa of brea

I pra be the vice co alluded tresses serious always posed endeav state o slavery fore, sender Royal your e comm milita Englis any le by Cl was t family fore, you to ence t peopl in op our a laws, land

Th has n ous t order the a of m ing t what if th ship circu defe (am disp lars on mor vail grea sho cur bar cier lan

ple; it was openly setting them at defiance, and that, too, at a time when there was neither riot, nor disposition to riot, in the metropolis, notwithstanding the distress necessarily experienced from the high price of bread.

I pray you, Sir, to consider what must be the consequences of acting upon the advice contained in the work to which I have alluded. The expense alone of inland fortresses and camps of exercise would be a serious matter; and, if the soldiers were always to remain faithful, can it be supposed that the people would not, at last, endeavour to get rid of such an intolerable state of things? Revolution, or absolute slavery, must be the result. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying, that the senders of the Threatening Letters to your Royal Highness are not nearly so much your enemies, as are those who would recommend you to attempt to govern us by a military force. The thing is impossible. Englishmen never could be so governed for any length of time. The project was tried by Charles and James, and the final effect was the placing of your Royal Highness's family upon the throne. Can those, therefore, be your friends, who would persuade you to put your trust in an army in preference to putting your trust in the love of the people? Can those be your friends, who, in open defiance of all the settled notions of our ancestors and of the maxims of our laws, would persuade you to rely upon inland fortresses and camps of exercise?

There is nothing which, for a long while, has made an impression more disadvantageous to the government, than the circular order of the Secretary of State *for securing the arms of the Local Militia*. This body of men are raised for the purpose of *defending the country* against its enemies; but, what a defence are we to look for in them, if they cannot be trusted with the guardianship of their own arms; and if, under any circumstances, a regular force is required to defend those arms? If the Local Militia (amounting to about 400,000 men) were disposed to use their arms against the regulars, it is manifest that the former, having on their side the people, of whom they more immediately make a part, must prevail; and, is it not, Sir, in the highest degree alarming to observe, that precautions should have been thought necessary to *secure the arms of that Local Militia*? A bare glance at these matters is quite sufficient to convince any man, that to rule England, for any length of time, by a military

force is impossible; and, that those who recommend such a mode of governing are the worst enemies of the throne. In short, the more I reflect upon this subject, the more firm is my conviction, that the true friends of your Royal Highness and your family will advise you to shun, to flee as you would the poisoned dagger, the councils of those who would persuade you that there is safety either for the country or yourself in any thing but the hearts and arms of a free people.

Amongst the *remedies*, therefore, for the ill-blood which recent events have shewn to exist in the people of England, I beg leave to recommend to your Royal Highness to shew your displeasure towards all those who may dare to advise you to adopt such measures as would tend to cause it to be believed, that you relied upon a standing army rather than upon the people's love. But, to do away, at once, all the grounds of jealousy, and to render the state of the country, both within and without, at all times perfectly safe, the plan, long ago suggested by MAJOR CARTWRIGHT, should be adopted without delay. This plan, in the work entitled "ENGLAND'S "ÆGIS," your Royal Highness has had submitted to you by the venerable author; and, if this plan were adopted, much of the danger now apprehended would instantly vanish. The enormous expenses of Barracks and of the troops deposited in them would become wholly unnecessary, and thus the resources of the country would be spared, or, would be disposable against the foreign foe. Every man paying taxes would then have arms in his house ready to use; and, as taxation and representation would go hand in hand, the whole of the arms would be, at all times, forthcoming in support of the laws. Under such a system, which the author shews to be nothing more than an enforcement of the constitution of England, there would never be a riot, because there would be nobody to make a riot who would not be immediately reduced to obedience. I beseech your Royal Highness to honour this plan with your attention. It has not, indeed, proceeded from the pen of a courtier or a flatterer, but it has proceeded from the pen of as loyal a subject and as zealous a supporter of the kingly rights as there is to be found in your father's dominions. His anxious wish is to see preserved the kingly government of this country; but, he at the same time wishes to see the people possess all their liberties. To secure the existence of

both is the object of his work, which will, I trust, be found more congenial to the taste and views of your Royal Highness than that, in which you are advised to govern Irishmen by the means of inland fortresses and Englishmen by the means of camps of exercise in the Prussian fashion.

This country, Sir, has always plumed itself upon being governed *by laws alone*, unmixed with military force. The Janisaries of Turkey and the Gens d'Armes of France we have been accustomed to view with horror. DE LOLME, in his account of our constitution, dwells with great emphasis and delight, on the magic powers of our *Writs*, our *Warrants*, and our *Constable's Staff*. Alas! Sir, what, especially when one reflects on these praises of our constitution; what are the feelings excited in reading, in our public prints, paragraphs like these?—"The special Commission for the trial of the Cheshire rioters opened yesterday. An intimation was received, that before the arrival of the Judges an attempt would be made to rescue the prisoners in the Castle; but, *by the seasonable arrival of a detachment of cavalry and infantry at Chester*, and the neighbouring towns, not the slightest apprehension of an attempt at a rescue is entertained.—At Chester about 600 of the City Local Militia, 300 of the North Lincoln, and 90 of the Oxford Blues, it is said, *will occupy the Castle Yard* during the trials, making an aggregate of nearly 1,000. Each man is to be furnished with *ten rounds of ball cartridge*."\*—What! English Judges, sitting to administer justice under the immediate, the openly visible, *protection of the musket!* This is, indeed, a most painful and humiliating sight. I do not take upon me to censure it. It is possible that the Judges would not be safe without such protection. But, I must still say, that it is by far the most sorrowful sight that Englishmen have seen for a long while. I ventured to suggest, sometime ago, that it would be wise to suffer the trials to come on at the assizes, in the usual course, and thereby give time for men's minds to cool. Mr. Perceval thought otherwise; he was for no delay in this case. I cannot, however, help thinking, that it would have been better to avoid, if possible, the em-

ployment of a military force in this way. I do not deny, that it may be unsafe for the Judges to sit without military protection; but, surely, the fact calls upon us for serious reflection as to the *cause*; into the reason why Judges cannot sit in the execution of their duty without the protection of a military force. It cannot be alleged, that there are any Jacobin or other Political Societies agitating the country and misleading the people; it cannot be alleged that the example of France is now operating in favour of republican principles; it cannot be alleged that the press is suffered to inculcate notions subversive of order, for, except in the way of *praise*, it dares hardly breathe with regard to public men or public measures. Yet, notwithstanding this strict discipline has been so steadily persevered in, the Judges at Chester require *military protection*; notwithstanding all the vigilance of your Royal Highness's Attorney General, a military guard is necessary to the administration of justice in an English county!

Seeing that this is the case, it appears to me, that reason points out the employing of means different from those that have been employed. Lawyers in general (there are some few exceptions) have no idea of any remedy but that of *punishment*, and this they apply to all cases. The people in Nottinghamshire broke frames. Well, what is the punishment for frame-breaking: *transportation*. Make it *death*. It is made death; and then, in order to avoid detection, the frame-breakers resort to unlawful oaths. Well! make it *death* to take or administer unlawful oaths! And thus they go on, never seeming so much as to dream of any other remedy than additional severity of punishment. To me it appears, that a *Proclamation* from your Royal Highness to the people of the disturbed counties, expressing your own feelings at their sufferings, explaining to them the cause of those sufferings, and speaking to them a cheering language as to the future; after which might have come denunciations against violators of the law—this is what, it seems to me, wise ministers would have advised. But, instead of this, the people have heard of nothing but menaces from your ministers, some of whom, and especially Mr. Perceval, have denied, that the persons chiefly concerned in the riots had suffered any thing at all from either want of work or dearth of provisions.

\* COURIER news-paper of the 25th and 26th of May, 1812.

The remaining head of my proposed observations must be reserved for a future Letter.—I am, &c. &c. &c.

WM. COBBETT.

*State Prison, Newgate,  
Wednesday, 27th May, 1812.*

*N. B.* The trial and punishment of Mr. D. I. Eton, for publishing the Third Part of Mr. Paine's *Age of Reason*, shall be noticed, in a particular manner, in my next. It is a very interesting subject, and the *public sentiment* has been most decidedly and most honourably pronounced upon it.—I begin, in this Number, the insertion of the Documents relating to the project for dividing the American States. I intend concluding the insertion in my next, and then to make some remarks upon that famous transaction.

### AMERICAN DOCUMENTS

*Relative to MR. HENRY'S MISSION, accompanying the Message of the President of the United States, of the 12th of March, 1812, to both Houses of Congress in America.*

*Washington, March 9, 1812.*

The following is the Copy of a Message sent by the PRESIDENT, this day, to both Houses of Congress:—

*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.*

I lay before Congress copies of certain documents which remain in the Department of State. They prove, that at a recent period, whilst the United States, notwithstanding the wrongs sustained by them, ceased not to observe the laws of peace and neutrality towards Great Britain, and in the midst of amicable professions and negotiations on the part of the British Government, through its public Minister here, a secret agent of that Government was employed in certain States, more especially at the seat of Government, in Massachusetts, in fomenting disaffection to the Constituted Authorities of the Nation, and in intrigues with the disaffected, for the purpose of bringing about resistance to the laws, and eventually, in concert with a British force, of destroying the Union, and forming the eastern part thereof into a political connexion with Great Britain. In addition to the effect which the discovery of such a procedure ought to have on the public

Councils, it will not fail to render more dear to the hearts of all good citizens that happy union of these States, which, under Divine Providence, is the guarantee of our liberties, their safety, their tranquillity, and their prosperity.

(Signed) JAMES MADISON.

March 9, 1812.

MR. HENRY to MR. MUNROE.—*Philadelphia, Feb. 20, 1812.*

SIR,—Much observation and experience have convinced me, that the injuries and insults with which the United States have been so long and so frequently visited, and which cause their present embarrassment, have been owing to an opinion entertained by foreign States, "that in any measure tending to wound their pride, or provoke their hostility, the Government of this country could never induce a great majority of its citizens to concur." And as many of the evils which flow from the influence of this opinion on the policy of foreign nations, may be removed by any act that can produce unanimity among all parties in America, I voluntarily tender to you, Sir, such means, as I possess, towards promoting so desirable and important an object; which, if accomplished, cannot fail to extinguish, perhaps, for ever, those expectations abroad, which may protract indefinitely an accommodation of existing differences, and check the progress of industry and prosperity in this rising Empire.—I have the honour to transmit herewith the Documents and Correspondence relating to an important mission in which I was employed by Sir James Craig, the late Governor-General of the British Provinces in North America, in the winter of the year 1809. The publication of those Papers will demonstrate a fact, not less valuable than the good already proposed; it will prove, that no reliance ought to be placed on the professions of good faith of an Administration, which by a series of disastrous events, has fallen into such hands as a Castlereagh, a Wellesley, or a Liverpool—I should rather say into the hands of the stupid subalterns, to whom the pleasures and the indolence of those Ministers have consigned it. In contributing to the good of the United States by an exposition which cannot (*I think*) fail to solve and melt all division and disunion among its citizens, I flatter myself with the fond expectation that when it is made public in England it will add one great motive to many that already exist, to induce that

nation to withdraw its confidence from men whose political career is a fruitful source of injury and embarrassment in America; of injustice and misery in Ireland; of distress and apprehension in England; and contempt every where. In making this communication to you, Sir, I deem it incumbent on me distinctly and unequivocally to state that I adopt no party views; that I have not changed any of my political opinions; that I neither seek nor desire the patronage nor countenance of any Government, nor of any party; and that in addition to the motives already expressed, *I am influenced by a just resentment of the perfidy and dishonour of those who first violated the conditions upon which I received their confidence; who have injured me and disappointed the expectations of my friends, and left me no choice, but between a degrading acquiescence in injustice, and a retaliation which is necessary to secure to me my own respect. This wound will be felt where it is merited; and if Sir James Craig still live, his share of the pain will excite no sympathy among those who are at all in the secret of our connexion. I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient Servant, &c.* — (Signed) J. HENRY. — James Munroe, Esq. Sec. of State.

Mr. Ryland, Secretary to Sir James Craig, late Governor-General of the British Provinces in North America, to Mr. Henry.

*Application to undertake the Mission to the United States.*

[Most Secret and Confidential.]

Quebec, Jan. 26, 1809.

My dear Sir,—The extraordinary situation of things at this time in the neighbouring States *has suggested to the Governor in Chief the idea of employing you on a secret and confidential mission to Boston, provided an arrangement can be made to meet the important end in view, without throwing an absolute obstacle in the way of our professional pursuits.—“The information and political observations heretofore received from you were transmitted by his Excellency to the Secretary of State, who has expressed his particular approbation of them, and there is no doubt that your able execution of such a mission as I have above suggested would give you a claim not only on the Governor-General but on His Majesty’s Ministers, which might*

*“eventually contribute to your advantage.” You will have the goodness therefore to acquaint me, for his Excellency’s information, whether you could make it convenient to engage in a mission of this nature, and what pecuniary assistance would be requisite to enable you to undertake it without injury to yourself.—At present, it is only necessary for me to add, that the Governor would furnish you with a cipher for carrying on your correspondence, and that in case the leading Party in any of the States wished to open a communication with this Government, their views might be communicated through you. I am, with great truth and regard, my dear Sir, your most faithful, humble servant,*

HERMAN W. RYLAND.

John Henry, Esq.

*Mr. Henry’s Letters to Sir James Craig, written whilst employed on a Mission to Boston.*

Answer to the Letter of Mr. Secretary Ryland, proposing the Mission, &c.—  
Montreal, Jan. 31, 1809.

Sir,—I have to acknowledge the favour of your letter of the 26th instant, written by the desire of his Excellency the Governor in Chief; and hasten to express, through you, to his Excellency my readiness to comply with his wishes. I need not add how very flattering it is to receive from his Excellency the assurance of the approbation of His Majesty’s Secretary of State, for the very humble services that I may have rendered. If the nature of the service in which I am to be engaged will require no other disbursements than for my individual expenses, I do not apprehend that these can exceed my private resources. I shall be ready to take my departure before my instructions can be made out. I have the honour to be, &c. J. H’Y.

H. W. Ryland, Esq. Secretary, &c.

*General Instructions from Sir J. H. Craig to Mr. Henry, respecting his secret Mission.*

His Excellency the Governor in Chief’s Instructions to Mr. Henry, Feb. 1809.

[Most Secret and Confidential.]

Quebec, Feb. 6, 1809.

Sir,—As you have so readily undertaken the service which I have suggested to you, as being likely to be attended with much benefit to the public interests, I am to request that with your earliest conveniency

you will proceed to Boston. The principal object that I recommend to your attention is, the endeavour to obtain the most accurate information of the true state of affairs in that part of the Union, which, from its wealth, the number of its inhabitants, and the known intelligence and ability of several of its leading men, must naturally possess a very considerable influence over, and will probably lead the other Eastern States of America in the part they may take at this important crisis. I shall not pretend to point out to you the mode by which you will be most likely to obtain this important information; your own judgment and the connexions which you may have in the town must be your guide. I think it, however, necessary to put you on your guard against the sanguineness of an aspiring party: *the Federalists, as I understand, have, at all times, discovered a leaning to this disposition, and their being under its particular influence at this moment, is the more to be expected from their having no ill-founded ground for their hopes of being nearer the attainment of their object than they have been for some years past.* In the general terms which I have made use of in describing *the object* which I recommend to your attention, it is scarcely necessary that I should observe, I include the state of the public opinion, both with regard to their internal politics, and to the probability of a war with England; the comparative strength of the two great parties into which the country is divided, and the views and designs of that which may ultimately prevail.—It has been supposed, that if the Federalists of the Eastern States should be successful in obtaining that decided influence, which may enable them to direct the public opinion, *it is not improbable, that rather than submit to a continuance of the difficulties and distress to which they are now subject, they will exert that influence to bring about a separation from the general Union.* The earliest information on this subject may be of great consequence to our Government, as it may also be, that it should be informed *how far, in such an event, they would look up to England for assistance, or be disposed to enter into a connexion with us.* Although it would be highly inexpedient that you should in any manner appear as an avowed agent, yet, if you could contrive to obtain *an intimacy with any of the leading party*, it may not be improper that *you should insinuate, though with great caution, that if they should wish to enter into*

*any communication with our Government, through me, you are authorized to receive any such, and will safely transmit it to me*—and as it may not be impossible that they should require some document by which they may be assured that you are really in the situation in which you represent yourself, *I enclose a credential to be produced in that view; but I must particularly enjoin and direct, that you do not make any use of this paper, unless a desire to that purpose should be expressed, and unless you see good ground for expecting that the doing so may lead to a more confidential communication than you can otherwise look for.* In passing through the state of Vermont, you will of course exert your endeavours to procure all the information that the short stay you will probably make there may admit of. You will use your own discretion as to delaying your journey, with this view, more or less, in proportion to your prospects of obtaining any information of consequence. I request to hear from you as frequently as possible; and as letters directed to me might excite suspicion, it may be as well that you put them under cover to Mr. —; and as even the addressing letters always to the same person might attract notice, I recommend your sometimes addressing your packet to the Chief Justice here, or occasionally, though seldom, to Mr. Ryland, but never with the addition of his official description. I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

(Signed) J. H. CRAIG.

John Henry, Esq.

*Credentials from Sir James Craig to Mr. Henry, Feb. 6, 1809.*

(Copy)

(SEAL.)

The bearer, Mr. John Henry, is employed by me, and full confidence may be placed in him for any communication which any person may wish to make to me in the business committed to him—in faith of which, I have given him this under my hand and seal, at Quebec, the 6th day of February, 1809.

(Signed) J. H. CRAIG.

*To his Excellency the Governor-General, &c. in answer to his Letter of Instructions.—Montreal, Feb. 10, 1809.*

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's letter of instructions, the letter of credence, and the cipher for carrying on my correspondence. I have bestowed much pains upon the cipher, and am, notwithstanding this, defi-

cient in some points, which might enable me to understand it clearly. I have compared the example with my own exemplification of the cipher, and find a difference in the results; and, as the present moment seems favourable to the interference of His Majesty's Government in the measures pursued by the Federal party in the Northern States, and more especially as the Assembly of Massachusetts is now in session, I think it better to set forward immediately, than wait for any further explanation of the means of carrying on a secret correspondence; which the frequency of safe conveyances to Canada will render almost wholly unnecessary. Should it, however, be necessary at any time, I take leave to suggest, that the index alone furnishes a very safe and simple mode. In it there is a number for every letter in the alphabet, and particular numbers for particular phrases—so that when I do not find in the index the particular words I want, I can spell it with the figures which stand opposite to the letters. For example, if I want to say that "troops are at Albany," I find under the letter "T" that number 16 stands for "troops," and number 125 for "Albany." The intervening words "*are at*" I supply by figures corresponding with the letters in those words.—It will be necessary to provide against accident by addressing the letters to Mr. ———, of Montreal, with a small mark on the corner of the envelope, which he will understand. When he receives it, he will then address the enclosure to your Excellency, and send it from Montreal by mail. I will be careful not to address your Excellency in the body of the letter, nor sign my name to any of them. They will be merely designated by the initials A. B. If this mode should in any respect appear exceptionable, your Excellency will have the goodness to order a more particular explanation of the card. It would reach me in safety enclosed to ———, Boston. I have the honour to be, &c.

J. H'Y.

*Burlington, Vermt. Feb. 14, 1809.*

Sir,—I have remained here two days, in order fully to ascertain the progress of the arrangements heretofore made, for organizing an efficient opposition to the general Government, as well as to become acquainted with the opinions of the leading people, relative to the measures of that party which has the ascendancy in the national councils.—On the subject of the embargo laws there seems but one opinion—namely, that they

are unnecessary, oppressive, and unconstitutional. It must also be observed, that the execution of them is so invidious, as to attract towards the officers of Government the enmity of the people, which is, of course, transferable to the Government itself; so that in case the State of Massachusetts should take any bold step towards resisting the execution of these laws, it is highly probable that it may calculate upon the hearty co-operation of the people of Vermont.—I learn that the Governor of this State is now visiting the towns in the northern portion of it, and makes no secret of his determination, as Commander in Chief of the Militia, to refuse any command from the general Government, which can tend to interrupt the good understanding that prevails between the citizens of Vermont and His Majesty's subjects in Canada. It is farther intimated, that in case of a war, he will use his influence to preserve the State neutral, and resist, with all the force he can command, any attempt to make it a party; I need not add, that if these resolutions are carried into effect, the State of Vermont may be considered as an ally of Great Britain. To what extent the sentiments which prevail in this quarter exist in the neighbouring States, or even in the eastern section of this State, I am not able to conjecture. I can only say, with certainty, that the leading men of the Federal party act in concert; and, therefore, I infer that a common sentiment pervades the whole body throughout New England. I have seen a letter from a gentleman, now at Washington, to his correspondent in this place; and as its contents may serve to throw some light on passing events there, I shall send either the original or a copy with this dispatch. The writer of the letter is a man of character and veracity, and, whether competent or not to form correct opinions himself, is probably within the reach of all the knowledge that can be obtained by the party to which he belongs. It appears by his statement that there is a formidable majority in Congress on the side of the Administration; notwithstanding which there is every reason to hope, that the Northern States, in their distinct capacity, will unite, and resist by force a war with Great Britain. In what mode this resistance will first shew itself, is probably not yet determined upon, and may in some measure depend upon the reliance which the leading men may place upon assurances of support from His Majesty's Representative in Canada; and as I shall

be on the s  
moment a  
effect, the  
sures may  
entions o  
Great pai  
and intell  
the comm  
of the sou  
France; a  
rage the b  
Confedera  
spirit wh  
parties.

Win

Sir,—  
Burlington  
northern  
am now  
ern.—  
when th  
sibility,  
hopes w  
led me  
opinions  
section o  
tiguity to  
with M  
promoti  
Majesty  
my dep  
sought  
versing  
bable r  
general  
opinion  
party d  
the Stat  
for itse  
to the  
may en  
licy of  
mocrat  
such a  
would  
bers;  
Govern  
involv  
all ev  
ference  
The  
wholly  
The p  
are no  
and f  
Britis  
on M  
nor t  
They

be on the spot to tender this whenever the moment arrives that it can be done with effect, there is no doubt that all their measures may be made subordinate to the intentions of His Majesty's Government. Great pains are taken, by men of talents and intelligence, to confirm the fears of the common people, as to the concurrence of the southern democrats in the projects of France; and every thing tends to encourage the belief, that the dissolution of the Confederacy will be accelerated by the spirit which now actuates both political parties. I am, &c.

A. B.

*Windsor, Vermont, Feb. 19, 1809.*

Sir,—My last (No. 3) was written at Burlington, the principal town in the northern part of the State of Vermont. I am now at the principal town in the eastern.—The fallacy of men's opinions, when they act under the influence of sensibility, and are strongly excited by those hopes which always animate a rising party, led me to doubt the correctness of the opinions which I received in the northern section of this State; which, from its contiguity to Canada, and necessary intercourse with Montreal, has a stronger interest in promoting a good understanding with His Majesty's Government. Therefore, since my departure from Burlington, I have sought every favourable occasion of conversing with the Democrats on the probable result of the policy adopted by the general Government. The difference of opinion is thus expressed:—The Federal party declare, that in the event of a war, the State of Vermont will treat separately for itself with Great Britain; and support to the utmost the stipulations into which it may enter, without any regard to the policy of the general Government. The Democrats, on the other hand, assert, that in such a case as that contemplated, the people would be nearly divided into equal numbers; one of which would support the Government, if it could be done without involving the people in a civil war; but at all events would risk every thing in preference to a coalition with Great Britain. The difference of opinion is not to be wholly ascribed to the prejudices of party. The people in the eastern part of Vermont are not operated upon by the same hopes and fears as those on the borders of the British colony. These are not dependent on Montreal for the sale of their produce, nor the supply of foreign commodities. They are not apprehensive of any serious

dangers or inconvenience from a state of war; and although they admit that the Governor, Council, and three-fourths of the Representation in Congress, are of the Federal party, yet they do not believe that the State would stand alone and resist the national Government. They do not, however, deny, that should the State of Vermont continue to be represented as it is at present, it would, in all probability, unite with the neighbouring States in any serious plan of resistance to a war which it might seem expedient to adopt. This, I think, is the safer opinion for you to rely on; if, indeed, reliance ought to be placed on any measure depending on the will of a rabble, which is ever changing, and must ever be marked with ignorance, caprice, and inconstancy. As the crisis approaches, the difficulty of deciding upon an hazardous alternative will increase; and, unfortunately, there is not in Vermont any man of commanding talents, capable of attracting general confidence, of infusing into the people his own spirit; and, amidst the confusion of conflicting opinions, danger and commotion, competent to lead in the path of duty or safety. The Governor is an industrious, prudent man, and has more personal influence than any other; but his abilities are not suited to the situation in which a civil war would place him. I am, &c.

A. B.

*Amherst, New Hampshire, Feb. 23, 1809.*

Sir,—A gentleman going direct to Canada, affords a safe and favourable opportunity of giving you some further account of my progress. I will not make use of the post-offices, when I can avoid it; because private occasions supersede the necessity of writing in cipher; and the contempt of decency and principle, which forms part of the morals of the subaltern officers of a democracy, would incline them to break a seal with the same indifference that they break their words, when either curiosity or interest is to be indulged.—I have not had sufficient time nor evidence, to enable me to form any opinion for myself of the lengths to which the Federal party will carry their opposition to the national Government in the event of a war. Much may be inferred from the elections of Governors, which within two months will be made in the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. From all I know, and all I can learn of the general Government, I am not apprehensive of an immediate war. The Embargo is the fa-

yourite measure; and it is probable that other means will be employed to excite England, to commit some act of hostility, for the sole purpose of placing the responsibility of war on that country; this I most particularly recommend to the consideration of Ministers. The dread of opposition, and of the loss of popularity, will certainly keep the ruling party at Washington inactive. They will risk any thing but the loss of power; and they are well aware that their power would pass away with the first calamity which their measures might bring upon the common people (from whom that power emanates), unless indeed they could find a sufficient excuse in the conduct of Great Britain. This impression cannot be too deeply felt by His Majesty's Ministers; nor too widely spread throughout the British nation. It will furnish a sure guide in every policy that may be adopted towards the United States. I have the honour to be, &c.

A. B.

*Boston, March 5, 1809.*

Sir,—I am favoured with another opportunity of writing to you by a private conveyance; and think it probable at this season, that the frequency of these will render it necessary to write to you in cipher.—It does not yet appear necessary that I should discover to any person the purpose of my visit to Boston; nor is it probable that I shall be compelled, for the sake of gaining more knowledge of the arrangements of the Federal Party in these States, to avow myself as a regular authorized agent of the British Government, even to those individuals who would feel equally bound with myself to preserve, with the utmost inscrutability, so important a secret from the public eye.—I have sufficient means of information to enable me to judge of the proper period for offering the co-operation of Great Britain, and opening a correspondence between the Governor-General of British America, and those individuals who, from the part they take in the opposition to the National Government, or the influence they may possess in any new order of things that may grow out of the present differences, should be qualified to act on behalf of the Northern States. An apprehension of any such state of things as is presupposed by these remarks, begins to subside; since it has appeared, by the conduct of the General Government, that it is seriously alarmed at the menacing attitude of the Northern States. But although it is believed that there is no pro-

bability of an immediate war, yet no doubts are entertained, that Mr. Madison will fall upon some new expedients to bring about hostilities. What these may be, can only be deduced from what appears to be practicable. A Non-intercourse with England and France will probably supersede the Embargo; which by opening with the rest of Europe a partial legitimate commerce, and affording strong temptations to that which is illegal, will expose the vessels to capture, detention, and embarrassment—will justify the present policy, and produce such a degree of irritation and resentment as will enable the Government of this country to throw the whole blame and responsibility of war from his own shoulders upon those of the British Ministry. If in this, the party attached to France should calculate with correctness, and the commerce of New England would greatly suffer,—the merchant being injured and discouraged, would not only acquiesce in the restrictive systems, but even submit to war. On the other hand, should the small traffic permitted by a Non-Intercourse Law be lucrative and uninterrupted, the people would be clamorous for more, and soon compel the Government to restore the friendly relations between the two countries. While I offer my opinion upon this subject, I cannot but express a strong hope, that if any terms should be proposed by either Government, to which the other might think proper to accede, that a principal motive to the adjustment of differences should be understood to arise from the amicable disposition of the Eastern States, particularly of the State of Massachusetts. This, as it would increase the popularity of the friends of Great Britain, could not fail to promote her interests. If it could not be done formally and officially, nor in a correspondence between Ministers, still, perhaps, the Administration in the Parliament of Great Britain might take that ground, and the suggestion would find its way into papers both in England and America.—Although I have frequently repeated, that this country cannot be governed and directed by a versatility of opinion, as there is nothing permanent in its political institutions, nor are the people under any circumstances to be relied on, when measures become inconvenient and burdensome. I will soon write again, and am, &c.

A. B.

*Boston, March 7, 1809.*

Sir,—I have now ascertained with as

much acc  
tended to  
sachusetts  
and politi  
general  
given a  
of war i  
to all re  
Congress  
enough  
party, b  
lature of  
to the m  
itself pe  
Members  
posed of  
and erec  
common  
This Co  
abrogatin  
a plan f  
and auth  
by such  
or receiv  
and I sh  
a corres  
Scarce a  
and, per  
sels of v  
protect  
navy wh  
tional  
connexio  
section o  
a civil  
pected,  
but it s  
sult of  
sition p  
ly to re  
at this  
tain the  
States  
unpopu  
events,  
would  
alienati  
Souther  
mon pe  
stitutio  
placenc  
in this  
tress,  
away  
withou  
would  
soon b  
affairs  
the ne  
also, t

much accuracy as possible, the course intended to be pursued by the party in Massachusetts, that is opposed to the measures and politics of the Administration of the general Government.—I have already given a decided opinion that a declaration of war is not to be expected; but contrary to all reasonable calculation, should the Congress possess spirit and independence enough to place their popularity in jeopardy, by so strong a measure, the Legislature of Massachusetts will give the tone to the neighbouring States; will declare itself permanent until a new election of Members; invite a Congress to be composed of delegates, from the Federal States; and erect a separate Government for their common defence and common interest.—This Congress would probably begin by abrogating the offensive laws, and adopting a plan for the maintenance of the power and authority thus assumed. They would, by such an act, be in a condition to make or receive proposals from Great Britain; and I should seize the first moment to open a correspondence with your Excellency. Scarce any other aid would be necessary, and, perhaps, none required than a few vessels of war from the Halifax station, to protect the maritime towns from the little navy which is at the disposal of the National Government. What permanent connexion between Great Britain and this section of the Republic would grow out of a civil commotion, such as might be expected, no person is prepared to describe; but it seems that a strict alliance must result of necessity. At present, the opposition party confine their calculations merely to resistance; and I can assure you, that at this moment they do not freely entertain the project of withdrawing the Eastern States from the Union, finding it a very unpopular topic; although a course of events, such as I have already mentioned, would inevitably produce an incurable alienation of the New England from the Southern States. The truth is, the common people have so long regarded the Constitution of the United States with complacency, that they are now only disposed in this quarter to treat it like a truant mistress, whom they would, for a time, put away on a separate maintenance; but, without farther and greater provocation, would not absolutely repudiate.—It will soon be known in what situation public affairs are to remain, until the meeting of the new Congress in May, at which time, also, this Legislature will again assemble.

The two months that intervene will be a period of much anxiety.—In all I have written, I have been careful not to make any impression analogous to the enthusiastic confidence entertained by the opposition, nor to the hopes and expectations that animate the friends of an alliance between the Northern States and Great Britain. I have abstracted myself from all the sympathies these are calculated to inspire: because, notwithstanding that I feel the utmost confidence in the integrity of intention of the leading characters in this political drama, I cannot forget that they derive their power from a giddy inconstant multitude; who, unless in the instance under consideration, they form an exception to all general rules and experience, will act inconsistently and absurdly. ° I am, &c. A. B.

*Boston, March 9, 1809.*

Sir,—In my letter No. 6, (March 5) I took the liberty to express my opinion of the probable effect of the Non-Intercourse Law, intended to be enacted; and of the mode by which Great Britain may defeat the great intention of the American Government in passing it. But as the sort of impunity recommended might, in its application to every species of commerce that would be carried on, be deemed by Great Britain a greater evil than war itself, a middle course might easily be adopted, which would deprive France of the benefit resulting from an intercourse with America, without, in any degree, irritating the Maritime States.—The high price of all American produce in France, furnishes a temptation which mercantile avarice will be unable to resist. The consequence is obvious. But if, instead of condemning the vessels and cargoes which may be arrested in pursuing this prohibited commerce, they should be compelled to go into a British port, and there permitted to sell them, I think the friends of England in these States would not utter a complaint. Indeed, I have no doubt that if, in the prosecution of a lawful voyage, the British cruizers should treat American ships in this manner, their owners would, in the present state of European markets, think themselves very fortunate, as it would save them the trouble and expense of landing them in a neutral port, and from thence re-shipping them to England, now the best market in Europe for the produce of this country. The Government of the United States would probably complain, and Bonaparte become peremptory; but even

that would only tend to render the opposition in the Northern States more resolute, and accelerate the dissolution of the confederacy. The generosity and justice of Great Britain would be extolled, and the commercial States exult in the success of individuals over a Government inimical to commerce, and to whose measures they can no longer submit with patient acquiescence.—The elections are begun, and I presume no vigilance or industry will be remitted to ensure the success of the Federal party. I am, &c. A. B.—P.S. Intelligence has reached Boston, that a Non-Intercourse Law has actually passed, and that Martinique has surrendered to the British forces.

*Boston, March 13, 1809.*

Sir,—You will perceive from the accounts that will reach you in the public papers, both from Washington and Massachusetts, that the Federalists of the Northern States have succeeded in making the Congress believe, that with such an opposition as they would make to the general Government, a war must be confined to their own territory, and might be even too much for that Government to sustain. The consequence is, that after all the parade and menaces with which the Session commenced, it has been suffered to end without carrying into effect any of the plans of the Administration, except the interdiction of commercial intercourse with England and France—an event that was anticipated in my former letters.—Under what new circumstances the Congress will meet in May, will depend on the State elections, and the changes that may in the mean time take place in Europe. With regard to Great Britain, she can scarce mistake her true policy in relation to America. If peace be the first object, every act which can irritate the Maritime States ought to be avoided; because the prevailing disposition of these will generally be sufficient to keep the Government from hazarding any hostile measure. If a war between America and France be a grand desideratum, something more must be done; an indulgent conciliatory policy must be adopted, which will leave the democrats without a pretext for hostilities; and Bonaparte, whose passions are too hot for delay, will probably compel

this Government to decide whether of the two great Belligerents is to be its enemy. To bring about a separation of the States, under distinct and independent Governments, is an affair of more uncertainty; and, however desirable, cannot be effected but by a series of acts, and long continued policy, tending to irritate the Southern, and conciliate the Northern people.—The former are agricultural, the latter a commercial people. The mode of cherishing and depressing either is too obvious to require illustration. This, I am aware, is an object of much interest in Great Britain, as it would for ever secure the integrity of His Majesty's possessions on this Continent, and make the two Governments, or whatever number the present Confederacy might form into, as useful and as much subject to the influence of Great Britain, as her colonies can be rendered. But it is an object only to be attained by slow and circumspect progression, and requires for its consummation more attention to the affairs which agitate and excite parties in this country, than Great Britain has yet bestowed upon it. An unpopular war—that is, a war produced by the hatred and prejudices of one party, but against the consent of the other party, can alone produce a sudden separation of any section of this country from the common head. —At all events, it cannot be necessary to the preservation of peace, that Great Britain should make any great concession at the present moment; more especially as the more important changes that occur in Europe, might render it inconvenient for her to adhere to any stipulations in favour of neutral maritime nations.—Although the Non-Intercourse law affords but a very partial relief to the people of this country, from the evils of that entire suspension of commerce to which they have reluctantly submitted for some time past, I lament the repeal of the Embargo; because it was calculated to accelerate the progress of these estates towards a revolution that would have put an end to the only Republic that remains to prove that a Government founded on political equality, can exist in a season of trial and difficulty, or is calculated to ensure either security or happiness to a people. I am, &c. A. B.

*(To be continued.)*